



Centre-State Relations in India: A Comparative Study of Relations Between Indian National Congress (INC) Government in Mizoram State with INC Rule and with BJP at the Centre

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Abstract

Within this time frame there was a change of ministry at the centre, before Lok Sabha Election of 2014 Indian National Congress, mother party of ruling Congress Party in the state of Mizoram, was ruling Central Government. But 2014, Lok Sabha Election was won by the Bharatiya Janata Party with a clear cut majority. As it is a regular experience that in India, regime change at the level of both union and state used to be followed by changing pattern of relations. This is more obvious when parties at the ruling chair at both levels are different from each other. Complaints and conflicts have been rising in number and degree from time to time. An attempt is made to analyse the changing pattern of relations with certain implications, strategies adopted both by the Centre and State to strengthen or weaken each other in a specific case of Mizoram.

Keywords: *Relations, Implications, Change, Discontentment, Initiative.*

Introduction

This article is concerned with relations between Mizoram State Government and Government of India during a specific timeframe i.e. from 2013 to 2016. An attempt is made in this article to highlight the Mizoram State Government relations with the INC-led UPA Government at the Union level covering a period from 2013 to 2014 Lok Sabha Election. Is there any major change after BJP led NDA Government was formed at the centre after the election?, efforts made by the State Government and the Union Government to improve relations with each other in a new regime, what are the strategies?, Is there any financial

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implication?, And, opinions of politician, bureaucrats and academicians in Mizoram relations with NDA Government are also highlighted.

The present ruling party i.e. Indian National Congress in Mizoram had come into power in 2008 after the Mizo National Front ruled the state for two consecutive terms. It won the state legislative assembly election again in 2013. Without any major mistakes and scandals, the party consolidated its power in the state. Meanwhile at the Union level in the Lok Sabha election of 2014, Indian National Congress was badly defeated by the Bharatiya Janata Party and formed government at the Centre under the new Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi. Modi advocated a new trend in the Indian Federalism of what he called “Competitive and Co-operative Federalism” and he tried to change the prospects and patterns of Centre-State relations in India. Being a Chief Minister of Gujarat, Modi had the experience of bitter relations between the State Government and the Union Government and its adverse consequence in his earlier days. In many of his speeches, after he became Prime Minister, he used to talk about the importance of more developed states to build more developed India and he pleaded for the cooperation of different states.

Methodology of the Study

To study events of importance the researcher depends a lot on Vanglaini newspaper (a local daily newspaper which is the largest circulated in the state). The newspaper not only covers local politics but North East India as well as politics of mainland India. Interview with politician, academicians and bureaucrats was held during collection of material by the researcher.

Initiatives taken by State Government to improve relations with the Union Government

Before coming to various efforts made by the State Government of Mizoram to improve relations with the BJP government at the centre, it is imperative to highlight her relations with the INC government at the Centre from 2013 to Lok Sabha Election of 2014. Mizoram had good relations with the Central Government of Indian National Congress before the BJP came into power at the Centre. Even the state flagship programme, ‘New Land Use Policy’ got support from the Centre in words and finance. Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Mr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia had expressed his satisfaction over the achievements made by Mizoram in health, agriculture and education and even went to the extent of commenting that he had congratulated the success of the State NLUP Programme and promised for its further success.¹

On 19th September 2013, at the Congress Bhavan Aizawl, Luizinho Faleiro, General Secretary, All India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge of North East had stated before the media that Mizoram Government under the leadership of Mr. Lalthanhawla had implemented what was promised to the people earlier and the people of Mizoram were with the government. He added that the promises made by the State Congress before 2008 MLA Elections like NLUP, development of youth, eradication of corruption and infrastructure developments had been implemented and due to this even the AICC President Mrs. Sonia Gandhi was happy with the State Government.²

Sonia Gandhi had also paid a visit to the state on 20th September 2013 to campaign for Congress in the coming state assembly election in the month of November. A public meeting was organised at 3rd MAP playground, Mualpui. On this occasion Sonia Gandhi asked the people to vote Congress in the election, and if Congress had won she promised that every possible help would be given. She also said that the needs and requirement of Mizoram put forwarded by the state Chief Minister would be dealt with as soon as possible. About the NLUP, she praised the scheme as it brought development to many families and she remarked that the state government was successful in the improvement of financial management. Chief Minister Mr. Lalthanhawla in return expressed his gratitude to Sonia Gandhi as she had taken every measure for the implementation of the promises she had made in the 2008 elections.³

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh paid a visit to the state on 16th November 2013 and he campaigned for the state congress asking the people to vote for Congress for the development of the state and promised all help from the centre.⁴ On 18th November 2013, Sonia Gandhi paid a second visit to the state to campaign for Congress party in the election. The AICC Vice President Mr. Rahul Gandhi also visited Champhai and Kolasib on 21st November 2013 for the same reason.

Mizoram was awarded the Best Performing State under the JNNURM and also the Best State for Overall Performance under the SJSRY in the year 2012-13 by the Union Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation. The former award was given to the best state among the Special Category States and UTs for outstanding work during the last seven years in the Basic Services to Urban Poor (BSUP) and the Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) both under the JNNURM. And, the latter award was also given to the best performing state among small states and UTs. Chief Minister Lalthanhawla had received from President Pranab Mukherjee on 21st January 2014 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

There was good relationship between Centre and State of Mizoram during this period as they belonged to the same party. Union Government did not have any major interference in the state politics. Mr. Lalzirliana, Home Minister of Mizoram said that Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee never totally depended on the direction and supervision of the Congress leaders in New Delhi in the inauguration ceremony of Lalthanhawla Auditorium on 12th January 2015.⁵ State Congress was given autonomy in the state politics but central leaders give them financial assistance and also campaign for the state when election comes. State's Flagship Programme, 'New Land Use Policy (NLUP)' under which selected families in rural and urban areas are given financial assistance of Rs 1,00,000 in a phased manner so that they could attain self-sufficiency in different occupations like poultry, piggery, fishery, small trades like weaving, hair cutting, permanent farming in orange and pineapple. This policy can also be implemented with the help of financial assistance from the Centre. Till May 2015, the NLUP assistance was given to 1,30,748 families. This flagship programme paved a very great role for Congress in winning the state election of 2008.

BJP at the Centre

Though Indian National Congress was badly defeated by its main rival BJP in the Lok Sabha Election of 2014, Government of Mizoram has been trying since the inception period till today to maintain good relations with the Union Government. Mr. Lalthanhawla attended induction ceremony of Mr. Narendra Modi as Prime Minister in New Delhi. He said that even though Congress was defeated at the Centre, the State Government was still strong and he hoped that Narendra Modi's Government would be better for India and Modi also used to be Chief Minister, so he hoped that he would have better experience and understanding of what problems confronted the state.⁶ In the political session held at Congress Bhavan, Aizawl on 31st May 2014, Chief Minister also said that it would be better for state congress and Mizoram when non-congress party had formed government at the centre.⁷

To build a close and friendly relationship with the BJP Government at the Centre, State Ministers and officials had gone to Delhi and met various Union Ministers in the initial period and later from time to time. In these meetings, various needs of Mizoram and problems faced were informed to the Union Ministers concerned. State ministers and officials had meetings with Officials at the Centre and the issues discussed thereon are as bellows:

[1] Mr. Lalthanhawla, State Chief Minister went to Delhi in the month of June, 2014 and met Prime Minister Mr. Modi in his office on 9th June. On 10th June 2014 he also called on V. K. Singh, DoNER Minister in his office and on 11th June he had discussion with Mr. Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs at Mizoram House, New Delhi. In these meetings with Prime Minister and Union Ministers, the CM had discussed important matters with them and informed them various needs and problems of Mizoram ranging from financial problems, power and electricity, problems in development work, needs of the NE states and he invited Prime Minister and the DoNER minister to visit Mizoram.⁸

[2] Chief Minister met the Finance Minister Mr. Arun Jaitley on 27th June 2014⁹ and told him that due to twenty years of insurgency, Mizoram was economically backward in comparison to other states. He requested the Finance Minister to help in finding solution to the financial problems of the State and the latter replied him that measures should be devised to improve financial condition of Mizoram. In the next day, Chief Minister met the Union Home Minister Mr. Rajnath Singh and discussed various needs of Government of Mizoram and boundary problems with Assam Government. In addition to that, some important topics were mentioned in this meeting such as:

- (a) Security Related Expenditure (SRE)
- (b) Inner Line Regulations
- (c) Conditions of Bru at Tripura Transit Camp
- (d) Kuki National Organisation

[3] CM met the Union Home Secretary Anil Goswamy on 5th August 2014, on the issue of Bru at Tripura Transit Camp and he asked him to delete those who did not want to return to Mizoram from the electoral roll.¹⁰

[4] Chief Minister of Mizoram met the DoNER Minister Mr. Jitendra Singh at Delhi on 29th September 2015, and informed him about various needs of the State. In the meeting with the DoNER Minister, the CM explained the transportation problems faced by Mizoram and to overcome this he also sent a request to the Civil Aviation Ministry to arrange direct flight between Delhi and Mizoram every day or twice in a week.¹¹

[5] Chief Minister of Mizoram, Mr. Lalthanhawla called on the Union Minister of State (independent charge) for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan at Delhi on 23rd February 2016 and requested the Union Minister to take steps for faster process of Oil and Gas exploration project in Mizoram.¹²

[6] On 27th February 2016, Health and Family Welfare Central Council Conference was held at Delhi and Health Minister of Mizoram also attended this conference. On this occasion, the State Health Minister requested the Union Health Minister to take measures to set up a Medical College in Mizoram and to make concession for Mizoram in the Medical Council of India norms. Union Minister on his part assented to the request to credit funds to be received by the state from National Aids Control Organisation (NACO) to the account of Mizoram State Aids Control Society (MSACS) instead of going through the State Finance Department.¹³

[7] On 24th May 2016, Chief Minister on his official tour to Delhi called on the Union Home Minister Mr. Rajnath Singh and discussed about importance of road connectivity between India and South East Asia through Myanmar and requested the Union Minister to expedite the on-going construction of Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project.¹⁴

[8] Inter-State Council Meeting was held at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi, on 16th July 2016. Chief Minister of Mizoram also attended this meeting. Mr. Lalthanhawla said that Prime Minister had a great vision for development of the country and Mizoram would take every effort to implement this vision.¹⁵ Though Mizoram had faced some problems with regards to appointment of Governor in the State and it can be regarded as an insult to Mizoram, Mr. Lalthanhawla did not mention about this while the Chief Minister of Delhi Mr. Arvind Kejariwal expressed his opposition of imposing President's Rule in the State without any reasonable causes. He also proposed a resolution to pass that before appointment of State Governor and Lt. Governor of UT the concerned states or UT should be consulted. Mr. Nitish Kumar, Chief Minister of Bihar, suggested abolition of Governor post. Unless the State Chief Minister was empowered in the matter of appointment and sacking of Governor and there should be transparency in the appointment of Governor.

[9] Chief Minister of Mizoram, Mr. Lalthanhawla went to Delhi and met the External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj at her office in the third week of July 2016. He had urged the External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj to scale up and strengthen the bilateral engagement with Myanmar. He apprised her of his tour to Myanmar in April this year and shared his thoughts on the need to strengthen the bilateral relations with Myanmar through the border trade, development investment, connectivity, political engagement and people to

people exchange to optimise the gains of the North Eastern States in the context of the Act East Policy. The Chief Minister requested Smt. Swaraj to take initiatives to ease restriction through a bilateral process to facilitate the movement of people between the two countries and explore the possibility of making the bus service regular between the two countries through Moreh. He also asked Smt. Swaraj to take measures to preserve and protect the Banyan tree known to the Mizo as “Khampat Bung” a symbol of Mizo unity planted in the 17th century. Smt. Sushma Swaraj on 26th of August 2016 informed the Mizoram Government that she had written to the Myanmar Government to take steps to protect the “Khampat Bung” (Banyan tree) located in the Khampat village in the country’s north-western frontier¹⁶.

[10] School Education Minister of Mizoram, Mr. H. Rohluna went to Delhi and met the Union Human Resources Development Minister Mr. Prakash Javadekar on 24th October 2016. Mr. H. Rohluna apprised the Union Minister of the salary problems faced by Hindi teacher employed under the CSS in Mizoram and requested him to take measures to solve the problem. Union Minister replied him that learning of Hindi as compulsory in the Middle and High School section in Mizoram is a very good thing and he promised that these Hindi teacher would get their salaries. He would inform the concerned department to take measure as soon as possible. He also said that the utilisation of this scheme in Mizoram would be examined and efforts would be made for the continuation of this scheme.

In the inauguration programme of tourist lodge at Serchhip on 7th June 2016, Chief Minister of Mizoram, Mr. Lalthanhawla said that Central Government had paid due attention to Mizoram as the state had done well among smaller states in India.¹⁷ Again, on 10th June 2016, the CM said at the Congress Bhavan that although UPA Government had given a very good care to Mizoram, the NDA Government might be better for Mizoram in this regard. He added that it did not matter whether BJP or INC formed the government at the Centre. They are going to favour those states who had performed their duties diligently and that were why Mizoram received a very good care from the NDA Government.¹⁸ On 17th of the same month CM at the Congress Bhavan said that BJP made an attempt to dominate the North East State but right now they did not dare to include Mizoram in this policy.

Discontentment

Besides these efforts of the State government to improve relations with the Centre after Modi’s Government came into power, there were some minor difficulties with the Union Government. There was no major conflict with the Union Government that was worthy of mentioning but only some minor difficulties and mis-understandings on various issues may be highlighted.

- a) With regard to state Flagship Programme NLUP, State Chief Minister said that due to accusation, Central had called explanation on NLUP from the State Government on the occasion of “Farmers’ day” organised at Synod Conference Centre, Aizawl on 14th January 2015.¹⁹

- b) Unfortunately eight months after BJP came into power at the Centre not even a single Union Minister visited Mizoram while the other North East states were visited by Union Ministers.
- c) Though the State Congress did not attack BJP directly, it did implicitly by availing religious intolerance towards the Christians that had tainted the BJP images. On 2nd February 2015, Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) made a statement²⁰ on the issue of Mr. Zoramthanga, President MNF acting as mediator between the Myanmar Government and rebels stating that any alliance with the BJP-led NDA Government was not a good thing and accused BJP of causing many troubles to Christians in India. CM of Mizoram also said on 24th April 2015 that the main aim of BJP Government was to transform India into a Hindu state.²¹ MPCC again made a statement on 14th July 2015 demanding punishment for Union External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Rajasthan Chief Minister Smt. Vasundhara Raje and his son Mr. Dushyant Singh, MP as they were involved in a scandal called “Lalitgate” and assailed of BJP Government for not taking any measures.²²
- d) Union Home Ministry informed the CAG to investigate the lottery system of Mizoram with Sikkim and Nagaland in October 2015. But Mr. Lalthanhawla said that there was nothing wrong in the state lottery system.²³
- e) Also in the campaign for Delhi Assembly Election 2016, BJP called the inhabitants of North East as ‘Immigrants’ in their Document Vision. The MPCC along with the All Assam Student Union (AASU) and Manipur Congress announce in a statement stating their opposition to the BJP’s Document Vision calling them as “Immigrants”.
- f) In the State of Mizoram, there was preparation for grand celebration of thirtieth anniversary of peace on 30th June 2016 under the guidance of Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA). The Prime Minister was re-invited by the State Chief Minister as he failed to respond to the invitation by the CYMA. The CYMA President and Organising Chairman Mr. Lalbiakzuala said that they had invited him to grace “Remna ni” on its thirtieth anniversary. He added that they invited the Prime Minister to grace because the occasion would provide opportunity to hold talks with him about the implementation of some of the terms and of memorandum of settlement signed between the Government of India and the MNF in 1986. Again this second invitation by Chief Minister did not receive any response from Prime Minister. No information was received from Prime Minister Office about the failure to attend the ceremony.²⁴
- g) An initiative taken by the Union Government and the BJP Mizoram Pradesh to commemorate a Mizo knight Khuangchera as Indian freedom fighter was cancelled due to stiff opposition from different political parties and the NGOs in the state like MZP, CYMA and MSU. Mr. Rajen Gohain, Union Minister of State for Railways, who was invited as the Chief Guest for the ceremony, said that he did not want to hurt the Mizo sentiment.²⁵ He lost his life fighting British Colonial Policy in the late 17th century. There was disagreement between the two opposing fronts. Mizo people claimed that Khuangchera at that time of his fighting did not know even the name of India, he had just fight for Mizoram. On the other hand, Union Government and State BJP on their turn had claimed that even though Khuangchera may not know India, his struggle against the British Colonial Policy was worthy of reward. On this issue,

Governor of Mizoram Mr. Nirbhay Sharma also stated that the Mizo's perception of freedom fighter must be reconsidered.²⁶ Adding that, as those people who opposed the British Colonial Policy are freedom fighter for their distinct group of people, they are at the same time freedom fighter for India also. Erstwhile, they may reside outside India, they are now included in the Union of India, so that Mizo could have had a broader national outlook, according to him.

Initiatives taken by Central Government to improve relations with the State

In his letter to all the Chief Ministers of Indian States on 24th February 2015, the Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi said that the Centre had accepted the Fourteenth Finance Commission recommendation which will help strengthen federal spirit of the country. He also mentioned in the letter that State government would have greater freedom in developmental work and for that matter financial assistance should be given to the States. He reiterated that strong States means strong Centre in India. Even if Central Government would lose financially if it accepts FFC recommendations, it would still pursue, he said.

Although the FFC recommendations are accepted, there were severe oppositions and submission of Joint Memorandum against changing of funding pattern which runs against the interest of Special Category States including Mizoram. After deliberate consideration, Union Ministry of Finance sent information to Secretaries of State Governments about sharing pattern on 28th October 2015. For a larger number of CSSs, 90:10 funding pattern will be continued for the NE states and Himalayan region states. In these schemes, 60:40 funding pattern will be followed for the remaining states. In some Central schemes, States Government will have the authority to pursue or not. In these schemes 80:20 funding pattern will be followed for the NE states and Himalayan region and for the rest of the state 50:50 will be followed²⁷. Again on 16th November 2015 at the North East Connectivity Summit in Shillong, Mr. Bibek Debroy, member of NITI Aayog announced that the Special Plan Assistance (SPA) under Normal Central Assistance for the NE states will be continued and adding that these states will be under the Special Category Status as before.²⁸

On 21st August 2014, the NE Chief Ministers meeting was held at Assam Administrative Staff College, Guwahati in the presence of the DoNER Minister Mr. V. K. Singh. Chief Minister of Mizoram Mr. Lalthanhawla also attended the meeting and he informed about the needs and problems of Mizoram to the Minister. The DoNER Minister said at the occasion that meeting was held in the North East itself to examine the needs and conditions of the NE states.

In the inauguration function of Food Park at Tumkur, Karnataka on 24th September 2014 Prime Minister Mr. Modi said that for development of the country there must be good co-operation between Central government and different States. Central must consider the views and opinions of the States and joint effort is needed to implement development schemes. He announced that strong State will lead to strong India. He added that earlier there used to be conflict between Centre and States, this wrong system must be substituted by team

work. Prime Minister also said that even though Chief Ministers belong to different parties, union is one and united efforts will lead to development²⁹.

Mr. Narendra Modi, when he became Prime Minister emphasised on the development of North East States and asked eight Union Ministers to go to the NE in an interval of two weeks. He asked his ministers to go and see the situation in the State rather than make planning from Delhi. As a result, various Union Ministers and officials visited Mizoram from time to time and held talks with the State Government Ministers and high ranking officials on the issues of their respective concerns. These visits paved the way for deeper understanding of the situation in the State and for closer relations between Centre and Mizoram. Union Ministers and important Officials who visited the State and discussed the issues thereon in a chronological order were as follows:

[1] Mr. Jitendra Singh, DoNER Minister had a discussion with the State Government officials at State Guest House, Aizawl on 15th April 2015. In this meeting he said that development of the NE states was one of the first priorities of Prime Minister and the DoNER Ministry would do its best for that purpose. Earlier, the NE states must go to Delhi but now the DoNER would go to NE to help them solve their problems and eight Union Ministers visited NE states in an interval of two weeks as Prime Minister's wish, he added.

[2] Mizoram was visited by Mr. Amit Shah, President of BJP, on 16th April 2015, public meeting was held at Vanapa Hall, Aizawl. He invited people of Mizoram to co-operate with BJP for development of Mizoram and Centre allotted Rs 1200 crore for development of youth in Mizoram. Mr. Shah was met by Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (Joint body of different Christian Denomination) requested him to make effort to stop violence against Christians and not to organise government function on important Christian holiday.

[3] Secretary, DoNER landed in Mizoram to stay here for three days on 12th May 2015 and met State Chief Minister Mr. Lalthanhawla. He also had discussion with State officials about organic farming.

[4] On 18th May 2015, Union Minister of State for Human Resources Development, Prof. Ram Shankar Katheria visited Mizoram. He made this visit as per recommendation of Prime Minister to Union Minister to visit the NE region to inspect what development had been carried out under their respective Ministry.

[5] On 26th May 2015 Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Mr. Kiren Rijju visited Mizoram. He said that Union Government had taken steps for the safety of the NE people and also talked about Bru refugee in Tripura.

[6] Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj, Mr. Nihalchand Meghwal was in Mizoram on 16th June 2015. He met state LAD Minister Mr. P.C. Lalthanliana and asked him to prepare project for development and submitted to the Central Government. A promise was given that those projects will be dealt by him as necessary. Strengthening of State Government and

devolution of more power to them to be able to function independently was the aim of Central Government he said.

[7] Union Textile Minister Mr. Gangwar inaugurated Weavers' Service Centre and Garment Manufacturing Centre here in Aizawl on 3rd July 2015. On the occasion he said that, it was the desire of Prime Minister to make the NE state developed and self-sufficient in weaving.

[8] Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Baliyan, Union Minister of State for Agriculture landed in Mizoram for two days visit on 17th August 2015. He made some important statements like 50:50 funding pattern will be reconsidered, sufficient financial assistance was earmarked for agriculture development in the NE and states are advised to prepare project for that. Central Government objective is to develop Food Processing Industry in the NE and to provide better transportation for easier market in agricultural products.

[9] Mr. Bandaru Dattatreya, Union Minister of State (independent charge) for Labour & Employment announced that Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) for workers' security and safety in health related matters will be established when he visited Mizoram on 7th October 2015. He also declared that an office will be set up to deal with the Employment Provident Fund (EPF) and there are more than 5000 people who are covered by EPF at present in Mizoram.

[10] In the month of October 2015, Mr. Ram Madhav, BJP National General Secretary (NE in-charge) at the North East Festival said that due to psychological and physical gap between NE region States and other States of India, the NE lagged behind other States of India in development. Central Government would take measures to bridge this gap and he concluded that without development in North East, India cannot be fully developed.

[11] DoNER Minister Mr. Jitendra Singh said that the DoNER Ministry will prepare project to make Mizoram "Bamboo State of India" when he visited the state on 23rd November 2015.

[12] Union Minister of State for Environment, Forestry and Climate Change (independent charge), Mr. Prakash Javadekar inaugurated a newly constructed building of State Forest Training Institute (SFTI) on 9th January 2016 and also called on Chief Minister and Governor of Mizoram.

[13] NITI Aayog member Mr. Ramesh Chand said that Mizoram needs to utilise Central Schemes and Policy effectively. He also met Chief Minister of Mizoram at his bungalow on 22nd April 2016.

[14] Indian Ambassador to Philipines Mr. Lalduhthlana Ralte, IFS and Indian High Commissioner to Malawi Mr. Vanlalhuma, IFS called on Industries Minister of Mizoram Mr. H. Rohluna, Home Minister Mr. R. Lalzirliana and Chief Secretary of Mizoram Mr. Lalmalsawma, IAS at the latter's offices on 2nd June 2016 and discussed with them over better co-operation between Ministry of External Affairs and Mizoram state. The two visiting

Ambassadors first called on Mr. H. Rohluna and told him that they visited the State as per the wishes of Prime Minister for better relation between Ministry of External Affairs and Mizoram.

[15] Two Union Ministers, Mr. Santosh Kumar, Minister of State for Textile (independent charge) and Smt. Niranjan Jyoti, Minister of State for Food Processing visited Mizoram on 3rd June 2016. Prime Minister had a great concern for the NE states development, every corner of India must develop to make greater and stronger India and for that every ministry work for the region both the visiting ministers said. Under the Textile ministry, Rs. 20 crore had been spent for Mizoram Industrial Growth Centre and the ministry had also made an effort to generate employment opportunities in the state as much as possible so that Mizo youth need not go outside the state in search of job. He also said that he would do whatever possible for Mizoram under his ministry. The next day, Mr. Santosh Kumar inaugurated an Apparel and the Garment Making Centre and delivered a speech saying that Central Government policy “Make in India” will provide employment opportunities to Mizo youth. He added that Central Government assented to six proposals for developmental projects in Mizoram which will cost a sum of Rs 114.82 crore and for these schemes Central will give to the state Rs 102.96 crore and the rest will be matched by State Government and the State Government will also be responsible for making proper detailed plan for efficient utilisation of these money.

[16] Mr. Radha Mohan Singh, Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister had a meeting with state officers in the departments of Horticulture, Agriculture and Fisheries at the Mizoram State Guest House on 19th June, 2016 and reviewed development work and disposal of money by these departments. He urged state officers to work for the benefit of farmers and to implement welfare programme for farmers prepared by Central Government. Ministers highlighted and appreciated development work in Mizoram under Central Government. And, Health Mela organised by Department of AYUSH, repairing work of Serchhip to Buarpui road under DoNER Ministry, projects carried out in Aizawl, Serchhip and Kolasib under Swach Bharat and creation of 2078 health worker post under National Health Mission.

[17] Mr. Anil Madhav Dave, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change (independent charge) visited Mizoram on 27th September and this was his first official visit to Indian state after he became Union Minister. He met Chief Minister and Governor of Mizoram. All the Forest Clearance applied by Mizoram for development works were given by the Ministry he said and if not, it means there might be some mistakes in the project.

[18] Union Minister of State for Human Resources Development (independent charge) Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey visited Mizoram on 28th October 2016 and had meeting with Governor and Higher and Technical Education Officials. Dr. Pandey said that development of NE states was the prime concern of Prime Minister and Central Ministers are informed to visit the region as frequent as possible. He told the State Governor that Mizoram needs referred to him should be dealt with as fast as possible.

These official visits and meetings therein by Union Ministers and important officials paved the way for closer and friendly relations between State and Union Government. But to make judgement of the success of these visits and meeting, it is too early and one needs to wait for things and time to come to judge the success or failure. Most of the projects and plans are in the initial stage but it is obvious that State Government is feeling contented with how Central Government had given treatment. Central Ministers and Officials also on their part had shown a very good care to the state.

Perceptions on Centre-State Relations

Mr. Lallianchhunga said³⁰ that there is no discrimination in the distribution of funds among the States as Central Government follows well defined criteria. He prophesised that BJP at the Centre may choose target community like Bru and other, to consolidate themselves in Mizoram. In the Christian-dominated state like Mizoram they may not popularise their religion but by using development as bait they will ask people to make comparison between BJP and Indian National Congress. Increase of various rate of tax and early acceptance of Goods and Services Tax by the State Government may mean conformity with Central directives and also to be able to hold their heads high before Central Government.

Mr. L. N. Tocchawng,³¹ Finance Commissioner of Mizoram mentioned that as the Central follows 14th Finance Commission Recommendation, there is no problem for Mizoram with regard to the Grants-in-aid and the state also received money for Centrally Sponsored Schemes regularly but due to delay in submission of Utilisation Certificate by the state departments sometimes funds cannot be received timely. Answering the question of can there be a party politics behind all the development policy under Central Government she replied that it is too early to make an analysis of the secret policy as such.

Finance Minister³² of Mizoram said that there was no problem for State Government when there was frequent change of Governor and said that unless Governor misbehave gravely they are all acceptable. He also said that due to changing of ruling party at Union Level the state did not face problems in Funds and grants-in-aid and the relations of Mizoram Government with Central Government is very good. There is nothing to fear for Mizoram even if BJP had ruled at the centre. Even if had BJP played party politics through development policy, as Mizoram is Christian state, BJP could not have much advantage here in Mizoram he said.

Findings

The then ruling party i.e. Congress came into power in 2008 MLA election and it again won in 2013 MLA election. At the centre, INC was defeated in 2014 Lok Sabha election by its main rival BJP. Due to the same party rule at both the centre and state level they maintained good relations with each other. Union Government did not have much interference in the state affairs before the Lok Sabha election of 2014. When BJP came into power at the centre, Mizoram State Government tried to build good relations with the Union Government. The CM of Mizoram attended the inauguration ceremony of PM Modi and said

that it would be better for state congress and Mizoram when non-congress party had formed ministry at the centre. To build friendly relations with the Union Government state ministers paid visit to Delhi from time to time and discussed various topics that concerned them.

The Central Government had paid due attention and good care on the problems of Mizoram and had taken many steps towards the improvement of relations with Mizoram. PM Modi advocated “Competitive and Co-operative Federalism” which would help to strengthen the federal spirit of country. He also advised his ministers to go to the NE and see the situation rather than making plan from Delhi. These visits played an important role in the improvement of relations between the Union Government and Mizoram. Meanwhile, there were some minor problems over some issues but these problems were not acting as hindrances in the relations between Union Government and Mizoram.

From the above mentioned findings, some relevant question on Mizoram relations with the Union government in the context of regime change at the centre can be answered as follows:

1. Whether regime change at the centre has had any adverse effect on the centre-state political relations?
 - The answer to this question from this finding is no. Even though UPA Government under INC was replaced by BJP under the coalition of NDA, Mizoram State Government under Congress did not face any major political problems with the Union Government though there were minor issues.
2. What are the main financial implications of such changed relations?
 - Due to Modi’s “Co-operative and Competitive Federalism” policy, states are expected to raise the state’s revenues. Mizoram Government also takes some measures to improve its economy. There is no major financial implication that runs against the interest of the state. Even the FFC recommendation to remove Special Category States was not implemented due to opposition from the NE states and the Status Quo is still followed. But financial dependency of the State Government is the main factor for developing good relations with the Union Government in the case of Mizoram as the state must conform to the words of the Union Government.
3. What are the institutional changes that could improve Centre-State relations?
 - From the account of the Mizoram relations with the Union Government right from the District Council period, it appears that financial issue had played a very big role in centre-MDC/UT/State relations. Political and economic factors are inter-related. It does not matter as to how the State Government depended heavily on Union Government, financially if it gets more funds for development.

From the findings of this article one can reveal that generalisation on Centre-State relations in India cannot be applied to every state. The problems faced by more developed and populous states cannot be the same with those faced by poor and less populous state like Mizoram. With the passage of time and changing of policy by the parties, those framework set earlier are not applicable in the study of Centre-State relations in India and new case study to examine relations are needed.

Conclusion

What is obvious from this article is that there are no any major changes in Mizoram state relations with the Central Government after regime changes at the Centre that are running against the interest of the state explicitly or implicitly. When INC was ruling at the centre, they were not interfering too much in the state affairs but only election campaign and supportive attitude to the state. But after Modi Government came into power at the Centre Union Ministers of different ministry frequently visited the state as recommended by Prime Minister Modi. Competitive and Co-operative Federalism is the main theme of Modi in centre-state relations and in pursuance of this policy efforts are made to devolve the financial autonomy to the state. Acceptance of the 14th Finance Commission Recommendation to increase States' share in shareable tax from 32% to 42% is an explicit initiatives of the Union Government.

As Mizoram is a resource-lacked state, it has to depend on Central Assistance. State revenue receipt and capital receipt are sometimes inadequate to cover State expenditure. This increase in the money required to be borrowed by the state upon the security of the consolidated fund of the state through various sources like RBI, Financial institution at market rate and Central Government. After BJP Government came into power Mizoram also tried to collect much more money through increasing of tax rate and enactment of new Act for tax collection.

Both the State and Central Government take initiatives to improve relations for the development of Mizoram. Visits and counter-visits have been taken place from time to time. The state did not have problems with Central Government regarding grants-in-aid. There are only some minor discontentments on various issues as mentioned earlier. State leaders like Chief Minister, Finance Minister and bureaucrats also expressed satisfaction on how the centre treated the state in the present condition.

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